

# JAPAN CHRISTIAN ACTIVITY NEWS

Chairman :

Tsunetaro Miyakoda

Editors:

Kaname Tsukahara

*Published by the Commission on Public Relations*

*of the National Christian Council of Japan*

CABLE CODE : JAPACONCIL, ADDRESS : CHRISTIAN CENTER, 2, 4 - CHOME GINZA, TOKYO, JAPAN

Subscription Rates : Japan ¥700; Foreign (Sea mail) \$2.00; (Air mail) \$3.50.

No. 98

February 15, 1957

## In These Pages

Minister Visits Formosa.....	1
Amami Oshima Kikai Church.....	1
Japan Christian Quarterly, January Issue.....	2
Christian Social Workers Meet.....	2
Christian Statistics.....	2
Dr. Stanley Jones Arrives.....	3
Christian Delegation to Communist China.....	3
National Foundation Day.....	4
In Brief.....	4

## MINISTER VISITS FORMOSA

The Reverend Yoshiyasu Kami, Minister of the Wada Hommachi Church of the United Church of Christ, has been invited by the Presbyterian Church in Formosa to tour the island for ten days during March to promote young peoples activities in the churches. Mr. Kami is a graduate of Tokyo Union Theological Seminary and lived in Formosa as a boy when his father was pastor of the Taipei Church.

## AMAMI OSHIMA KIKAI CHURCH

Christians of the Amami Oshima islands south of Kyushu dedicated their renovated Kikai Church on January 27. Funds totalling ¥ 430,000 were contributed for this purpose by the United Church of Christ by means of a special fund-raising campaign. The Reverend Jiro Fukui, who became pastor of the Church in April, 1956, reports morning worship service attendance to average more than fifty, prayer meeting attendance to be about forty, and two Sunday schools as having a total average attendance of about 160 pupils.







JAPAN CHRISTIAN QUARTERLY, JANUARY ISSUE

The Japan Christian Quarterly January 1957 issue, is just off the press. This is the first to be published under the editorship of the Reverend Arch B. Tayler Jr. of the Southern Presbyterian Mission in Shikoku and is devoted primarily to a discussion of Missionary Strategy. In it Dr. R. A. Egon Hessel, independent missionary in Osaka discusses "Missionary Strategy in Ecumenical Discussion" Dr. John Cobb, Methodist Missionary in Kobe describes "Cooperation between The Interboard Committee for Christian Work and the United Church of Christ" the Reverend A. L. Gillespie of the Southern Baptist Mission tells of the program of his mission and the Japan Baptist Convention in an article entitled "Beginning at Jerusalem", The "Strategy of The Japan Lutheran Missionaries Association" is related by the Reverend Harold G. Deal Jr. of the United Lutheran Church, Dr. William A. McIlwaine reports the unique relationship of "The Southern Presbyterian Mission and the Japan Church" and the work of "The Evangelical Alliance Mission (TEAM) in Japan" is briefly presented by the Reverend James C. Frens. Besides these there are a number of interesting articles and the usual translation of a Japanese sermon, translations from the religious press, book reviews, news item and personals. Those who wish to be informed on the Christian missionary program in Japan cannot afford to be without this Quarterly.

CHRISTIAN SOCIAL WORKERS MEET

Fifty-four social workers attended a conference at the Higashi Matsuki Hotel in Ito Shizuoka (February 11-13) under the auspices of the Christian Social Work League. Subjects discussed were "Child guidance," "Protective measures for mothers and children," "The Medical Security System," "Standard of Medical and Protective Agencies."

CHRISTIAN STATISTICS

Statistical reports received from affiliated denominations in preparation for the Annual Meeting of the National Christian Council include the following information:

United Church of Christ: churches - 1,524 (increase - 69), ministers - 2,095, missionaries 378, members 169,971 (increase - 5,574).

Episcopal Church: churches - 348, (increase - 4), ministers - 316, missionaries - 78, members - 38, 538 (increase - 1,248).

Evangelical Lutheran Church: churches - 94 (increase - 6), ministers - 81, members - 8,388 (increase - 622).







DR. STANLEY JONES ARRIVES

Dr. Stanley Jones arrived in Japan on January 30 for a three months program of evangelistic services and Christian ashrams. Speaking at his reception at the Ginza Christian Center he stressed the opportunities which confront the Christian movement in this country. "I am not impressed so much by your difficulties," he said, "as by your opportunities which are far greater than your difficulties." "I have been a missionary for fifty years," he declared, "and I know how difficult it is to propagate Christianity in the midst of a non-Christian culture; it is the most difficult thing in the world." "In India, where there is a caste system, a person must sever relations with his family; he must leave home, when he accepts Christ; but in Japan this does not occur," he continued. "If we were as fortunate as this in India," said Dr. Jones, "we would think it were wonderful." Again he explained that in India if a hundred persons signed decision cards there would be a riot, whereas in Japan it isn't even news. Regarding the religious life of the people, he said, "Most people with whom you deal have superstitions but little faith, - no deep faith." Consequently he believes that there is an opportunity here for a great forward movement. How long it will remain, he thinks is a matter of doubt. "In China we used to get new Christians by the hundreds, but today China is closed," he concluded.

CHRISTIAN DELEGATION TO COMMUNIST CHINA

A party of Christian leaders are leaving Japan on April 23 for a goodwill visit of approximately one month to Communist China under the leadership of the Reverend Junichi Asano, Minister of the Mitake Church of the United Church of Christ in Japan and a professor at Aoyama Gakuin and Japan Biblical Seminary. Other members of the party, according to the Christian Press (Kirisuto Tsushin) are the Reverend Juji Ogasawara, Pastor of the St. Paul's Episcopal church in Gifu, the Reverend Shiro Aoyama, Prominent Lutheran Minister, the Reverend Kiyoki Yuya, Chairman of the Japan Baptist Convention and minister of the Mejirogaoka Church, the Reverend (Mrs.) Tamaki Uemura, Minister and YWCA leader, the Reverend Mitsuo Seno, Chairman of the Social Affairs Department of the Japan Evangelical Alliance Church, Miss Masako Takegami, Director of the Japan WCTU, Mr. Toshio Suekane, General Secretary of the Yokohama YMCA, Miss Hatsue Nonomiya, Director of Yuwakai (FOR), Mr. Yoshio Inoue, Chairman of the Friends of Jesus Peace Society and professor of the Tokyo Union Theological Seminary, the Reverend Shigeo Yamamoto, minister of the Naka Shibuya Church, and Mr. Seichi Wake, Editor of the Christ Weekly. Although previously listed as members of the delegation, the Reverend Yoshimune Abe, General Secretary of the Education Association of Christian Schools, Honorable Junzo Sasamori a member of the Diet, and the Reverend Keitaro Nishimura, Chairman of the National Council of Episcopal churches are not going.







## NATIONAL FOUNDATION DAY

Religious leaders are divided in their opinion regarding the proposed revival of "Kigensetsu" (February 11), as "National Foundation Day." The Right Reverend Michael H. Yashiro is quoted in the Christian Press (Kirisuto Tsushin February 8, 1957) as favouring the restoration of this former National Holiday. The Reverend Michio Kozaki, Chairman of the National Christian Council, however, disapproves because "its past association was bad" and because of the reactionary tendencies of those promoting the proposal. The Reverend Takeshi Muto, Moderator of the United Church of Christ in Japan, also is opposed because of fear that it will be used to encourage the revival of narrow nationalism. But the last two would prefer that some date such as the day of promulgating the new Constitution be adopted. The Reverend Tsunetaro Miyakoda, General Secretary of the Japan Bible Society, and the Reverend Yoriichi Manabe, Chairman of the Christian Social Workers League, both favour February 11. Mr. Miyakoda opposes selection of May 3 because of the possibility that the Constitution may be revised, while Mr. Manabe draws attention to the point that the lack of historicity should not prevent selection of February 11 because even Christmas itself is not necessarily an historically accurate date. Mr. Shun Suzuki, President of the Japan Home Bible League, opposes both February 11 and May 3 and declares that selection of a National Foundation Day should be delayed until Japan has attained a complete democracy.

In 1873, February 11, 660 B.C. was officially designated by the Japanese Government as the date on which Japanese first emperor, Jimmu Tenno, ascended the throne and was made a National Holiday. It was called Kigen Setsu, (literally, Chronicle-Beginning Festival). During the twenties an effort was made to change the name to Kenkoku Sai, (literally, Establishment of the Country Festival), but the movement failed. Kigen Setsu is of modern origin. It was not celebrated prior to the Meiji Era. The day, month, and year were officially decided on the basis of references in the Nihon Shoki (Chronicles of Japan); but Japanese historians are generally agreed that the date 660 B.C. is at least six hundred years too early. Because of its close connection with early Shinto mythology, the occupation would not permit the day to be observed as a national holiday. At present there is a small but active and influential group, backed by the Shrine Association, which is seeking to have the day again made a National Holiday.]

## IN BRIEF

Although only 200 can be accommodated, 122 Ministers and 93 laymen have sent in applications for the ashram to be conducted by Dr. Stanley Jones at the Southern Baptist Conference site at Amagisan-so on the Izu Peninsula.

- - - - -

A gift of \$3,116.35 received from the United Church of Canada by the Council of Cooperation of the United Church of Christ in Japan is to be used for transportation of relief supplies to Hokkaido.

- - - - -

Only twenty percent of the children in institutions managed by protective agencies are orphans. The rest are from the homes of criminals, lepers, ill persons, and from broken homes.







There are 68 Christian Schools, 410 kindergartens and 155 day nurseries affiliated with the United Church of Christ in Japan.

The following obstacles are said to hinder the religious education program of the church:

1. Sunday is devoted to special lessons in music, drawing, ballet, etc.
2. Community activities are held on Sunday.
3. Indifference on the part of clergy and laymen.
4. Scarcity of qualified teachers.
5. Withdrawal of teachers due to marriage.
6. Sunday is devoted to preparation for examinations.
7. An unfavourable attitude of public school students.

The Annual Meeting of the N.C.C. will meet at Aoyama Gakuin March 5-6. Two hundred delegates are expected.

The Japan Council of Evangelism for the Blind is preparing a Braille edition of the Colloquial New Testament, which will cost more than ¥ 300 a volume to produce but will be sold for ¥ 120 each.

The Reverend Kiyoshi Hirai, General Secretary of the N.C.C. is planning to attend the meeting of The Central Committee of New World Council of Churches which meets at Yale University July 30 to August 7.

Some eight hundred "volunteers" affiliated with churches in the metropolitan area met at the Ginza Church on February 2 to confer regarding their work and listen to an address by Dr. Stanley Jones. Three "volunteers" who have been especially successful in their evangelistic efforts told of their experiences.

The World Day of Prayer will be observed in Japan on March 8. The program, which was prepared by a refugee from Hungary, will be printed in Japanese, English and Braille.

Prince Mikasa, youngest brother of the Emperor and well known Old Testament scholar, attended a recent meeting of the Society for Study of the Old Testament at the Ginza Christian Center and showed pictures of excavations in Iran and Iraq which he took on a trip made to those countries in 1956.

The Committee on Christian Education of the United Church of Christ met at the YWCA Lacy Hall in Hayama January 30-31 to prepare for "Education Emphasis Year" which will be observed next year.



